1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

Although the number of exceptions seems to be increasing, the recognized form of residence *in all but secondary marriages is matrilocal.*[1] Secondary marriages, where the man is already established on his own trap line, follow independent or patrilocal residence. One of the primary factors that seems to be undermining the custom of matrilocal residence is the inheritance of trap lines. In one instance this economic factor led a man to insist on both matrilocal residence for his daughter and patrilocal residence for his son. River Joe first expressed resentment when his daughter married outside of the Kaska area and took up residence in her husband's community several hundred miles away. "Where he get girl, stay there," Joe stated and pointed out that his daughter had access to a good trap line which could adequately support the couple. A few months later his son, Ted, became interested in a part Tahltan girl from the upper Dease River. Now the father affirmed that when his son married, he should remain on the family trap line. Where a young unmarried man holds ownership in a productive family trap line, or where he is anxious to acquire his own (as was Louis Maza), matrilocal residence is temporary, merely fulfilling the conditions of bride service and lasting only a year or two. When an Indian girl marries a white man independent residence is always followed.

Interesting information was obtained regarding a man's adjustment to the country in which he must operate after marriage. "First time pretty hard for me," Hans Donnelly reported. "I don't want to hunt nothing. I don't want to get lost. Now all right." From this instance it would appear that a man can learn the terrain and routes of a new area in about two years. There is no evidence that matrilocal residence poses any difficult problems of social adjustment for the man. He assumes the authority in his own family, lives in his own dwelling and, except for offering meat and other assistance to his father-in-law, pursues his own economic interests.

Adoption of young children is often practiced to increase the size of the nuclear family. The principal motives are the desire to insure future economic assistance and to provide care and subsistence for an orphan or half orphan whose surviving parent cannot effectively do so. While there are no fixed rules defining adoption, in general the relationship is assumed to be permanent and any measures taken by a surviving parent to abrogate it are regarded with resentment. Nevertheless adoption is often temporary and children often reclaimed by parents or by parents' siblings. Adopted children ideally achieve the status of true children. Manifestly, however, they may be overworked and sometimes are even more deprived of emotional satisfaction than true children. There is reluctance to adopt children who, it is feared, are not normal or healthy.

The private life of the Kaska family is not easy to observe. This is due to the social isolation maintained by the family, as well as to the slight interaction that is manifested publicly between spouses. While several newly married couples revealed signs of close emotional attachment, it is not usual for older ones to demonstrate any considerable amount of affection except possibly when intoxicated. Terms of endearment also seem to be lacking in the conversation of husband and wife, although a number of men (especially when drunk) were observed to address their wives as "mama." The general pattern of relations between marriage

[1] Generalization based primarily on Upper Liard River data.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

ner's tribe or with Indians outside of the Kaska nation, but plans for such unions are not 582
seriously blocked if previous marriages have helped cement relations between such groups, and if the match itself is regarded as a good one. It may also be noted that a desirable marriage between members of the same moiety is readily condoned if one of the partners, or a partner's mother (sometimes even a maternal grandmother), has been only conventionally classified with the side and originally came from a tribal district lacking dichotomous organization.[31]

Marriage may, as usually happens, be directly negotiated between the boy and girl or 584
it may be originated by the father of a marriageable daughter. Generally a boy proposes to a girl, who either indicates her acceptance or rejection or else refers him to her father. Consultation between the boy and his sweetheart's father is regarded as the desirable and correct way of negotiating marriage. Old Kean complained that nowadays many couples agree to live together without consulting the girl's parents and, as a result, worthless men often succeed in marrying good girls. The pattern of consulting the girl's father may be only indirectly accomplished, as when a shy youth requests permission to trap with a man, leaving the more fundamental motive of his petition to be inferred. The prospective father-in-law is ideally regarded as an arbiter qualified to pass upon a youth's suitability as a husband. During the period of field work one instance was noted of a confident and headstrong part-Tahltan girl asking a boy's father for permission to marry the latter's son. This behavior was recognized as atypical and was pointed to as an unfavorable sign. "That means they're not gonna stay together long," Old Man opined. "Better if boy run after the girl." River Joe, whose son was being sued, appeared less concerned with this aspect than with the fact that there was distant kinship between his and the girl's family. He invited the ethnographer to trace this relationship and was pleased to learn that the children were distant cross-cousins.

The second pattern of marriage is illustrated when, as sometimes happens, a man with a marriageable daughter keeps watch for a likely son-in-law. If among the unmarried young men (or white men) he notes one who is unrelated and who is not by birth a member of his daughter's moiety, he may invite the prospective son-in-law to trap with him for a winter. This situation, once the boy accepts the invitation, is calculated to bring the young people into intimate association. If the couple decide to stay together, the man's visit assumes the character of bride service and a marriage is recognized.

In cases where marriage has been initiated by a young couple and approval has been re- 583
ceived from a girl's father, the son-in-law changes his residence to the winter settlement of his fiancée and begins an indefinite period of bride service, which is ideally stated to last about a winter but which really has no formal termination in cases where matrilocal residence continues permanently. The boy hunts for his father-in-law's family and traps on the latter's trap line. Fur that the youth accumulates becomes his own, the family looking to the young man mainly for additional meat and necessary assistance. Sexual relations are implicitly permitted during the period of bride service, so that this relationship is often tantamount to marriage. In at least one instance, however, the expectations of a young man

[31] See above, p. 133.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

583 [177] (Peter Tom) were dashed when, after a period of living with his sweetheart, the girl's father (River Joe) forbade the legalization of the union by the missionary.

The English word "married" is generally reserved by Kaska speakers to designate unions which have been sanctioned by the Roman Catholic missionary. Approximately four out of five families with children have been instituted with religious sanction and the ideal attitudes of the people are strongly in favor of such "church marriages." "Married more better," River Joe explained. "No married, people split all the time that way." Generally by the time religious recognition of a marriage is sought, the couple have already "stayed together" in the girl's family for a year or more. Such staying together, once it has continued for a time, can be said to constitute "Injun married" or "blanket marriage."

From the foregoing it will be clear that no hard and fast line can be drawn between the period of bride service and the inception of a marriage relationship. Often the two gradually merge one into the other and it is mainly by the boy's behavior toward the girl that a state of marriage can be diagnosed. If the boy appears in public with his finacée, buys grub for her, and if they share their own dwelling, then marriage has occurred. Even these diagnostics may lack clear significance, however, in the case of an unattached older adolescent girl who seeks support for the winter by living with a youth (who purchases a joint winter outfit) but in the summer returns to independent living.

591 [559] Following marriage, the woman gradually becomes known by the man's surname. The husband builds a cabin or tent frame near his wife's parents' dwelling. The form of marriage is always monogamous and has been so during the past forty years.

595 One rather exceptional instance of what might be considered as true polyandry was noted. For five years Dorothy Plover had been married to a white man who acknowledged some slight degree of Cree ancestry. He was much older than Dorothy and by him she had borne one child. In Lower Post, while continuing to live with this husband, Dorothy simultaneously began to live with another and also much older white man (her first husband's employer), who allegedly fathered her second child. After some months, Dorothy's first husband, although he continued to refer to the woman as his wife, moved a short distance from the town and Dorothy began openly to live with the putative father of her second baby. This behavior was commented upon rather unfavorably by several Indians, who referred to Dorothy's revival of an "old fashioned way." Dorothy's father, a Tahltan Indian, raised no serious objection to the second union when he visited Lower Post.

586 [177] Non-support, cruelty, and infidelity are the reasons commonly given for divorce in Kaska society. Divorce is simply accomplished by separation, although when a church wedding has occurred this form of divorce is of course not sufficient to bring about legal dissolution of a marriage. Several years ago the remarriage of an improperly divorced man led to his arrest and imprisonment and the incident is still recalled as an illustration of the binding nature of church marriage.[22] Within the society little notice is taken of separation unless it occurs between a couple who have been married for some time and have children. In divorce, children remain with the mother unless they are old enough to prefer the father and able to care for themselves. Statistics on divorce were difficult to obtain. The incidence is undoubtedly high in marriages which do not have a legally binding character but here,

[22] See Old Man's autobiographical sketch below, p. 323.

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A few stole away at night to visit or sleep with sweethearts, but this was not the rule. Most lads were afraid to have any connection with the opposite sex, at least during their training period, for it was believed a lad doing so would be retarded in obtaining a manitou and would never be a good hunter. It is said the young men had a great deal of fun among themselves and many did; married men consider the years they spent in the young men's lodge as the most happy time of their lives.

MARRIAGE

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Persons could only marry members of the opposite phratry and never one of their own. The male took the initiative and did the choosing in marrying the girl of his choice. His mother with her husband then went to see the girl's parents. If they were agreeable the marriage was thereupon arranged and the lad was told he would get the girl. The lad now commenced to work for his future parents-in-law. He gathered and split wood for them whenever he saw they required help of this kind, and he also hunted frequently and gave them the game he killed. He was very attentive to them and was constantly on the alert to do them some service. If his future parents-in-law went off on some lengthy hunting or trapping trip he accompanied them and worked for them. He also hunted

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583 and trapped and gave all he killed to them. In their turn they saw he had plenty to eat and was well provided with moccasins. He did not sleep and eat in the family lodge but outside in a shelter by himself, and it was the duty of his future mother-in-law to feed him. He continued thus to work for his future wife's parents for several months. There was no set time, but most lads worked from two to three to upwards of six months. 583 584 A good many worked an entire winter. Arriving at some convenient time the lad's parents again met the girl's parents, this time to discuss the marriage presents or purchase price of the bride. These presents generally consisted of blankets, skins, shells and other things of standard value. After the value of the presents had been agreed on the lad's parents again visited the parents of the bride accompanied by some young men relatives or friends of the lad who carried the presents. When the latter had been received and had been passed upon as satisfactory a date was set in the near future for the union of the prospective bride and bridegroom. Sometimes a feast was given to the bridegroom's parents by the parents of the bride. This was done by some wealthy 583 people. On the date appointed the bride's mother took the bride to the house of the bridegroom's parents and delivered her to the bridegroom. The couple were now considered fully and ceremonially married. The presents

(or purchase money) received by the bride's parents were distributed among their relations. Afterwards the same value of presents was given by the bride's parents to the newly-wed couple. From now on the wife followed her husband wherever he went. Generally he took her at once to his uncle's house where they spent their honeymoon. Later they generally started a house by themselves. It was the rule for the man to continue living among his people although he might have a separate house of his own. Thus most frequently wives lived among their husband's people. However visits more or less lengthy were occasionally made to the wife's people.

Some say lads who were engaged to be married generally still continued to live with other young men in the young men's lodges, only repairing occasionally to the home of his fiancee's parents to do work for them. If he went off on a trip with them he lived in a separate shelter. Thus at the time of his marriage as a rule he was not an inmate of either his own parents' house nor of his fiancee's parents house. When the marriage ceremonies had been completed and his bride delivered, he did not enter with her into the house of the parents of either side, but straightway took her to the house of his uncle, cousin or some other relatives where they lived for a time. Afterwards the couple might visit or live with either set of parents but

or had become pubescent.

Girls when married at once took off their necklaces, collars and other ornaments they wore which were emblematic of maidenhood.

They also changed their style of hair dress and henceforth wore their hair as women did in a single braid which hung full length down the back. After marriage they seldom painted their faces except for dances. There were no marriage dances nor marriages by touching as among the Salish tribes. Neither were there marriages by elopement nor by feats of strength, etc., such as wrestling as is said to have been the case in some tribes to the North (Eskimo, for instance).

Sometimes a lad was suspected of sleeping with a girl and was found out. The girl's mother then asked her daughter the truth of the matter. She would acknowledge what she had done and give her reason as owing to her love for the lad or man. The mother then went to the lad's father and told him. If the two families were of about equal rank a marriage was then generally easily arranged. If however the lad's father was very wealthy or of high rank and the girl belonged to a very poor or low family there was often difficulty and much bad feeling. Perhaps the lad's father did not wish his son to marry into such a family. If the lad was in love with the girl he sometimes managed after a

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children, and when he realized this promise another reward accrued to the husband. Not only did marriage provide a dependable source of sexual gratification but a young man secured his reputation in the community when he no longer had to "bother" girls or other men's wives in order to obtain such satisfaction. On the other side, women welcomed marriage for its economic rewards, like an abundance of food and skins for clothing, as well as for sexual opportunities and the children that might follow.

Boys married around the age of 18; that is, when they were old enough to meet the primary qualification of a husband, namely, to be able to earn a living by hunting. Girls married when about 16 years old or shortly after menarche. An older brother ideally took a bride before his junior but an elder sibling's prerogatives were not so great that parents interfered with a younger brother's marriage plans. While great disparity between the ages of spouses sometimes occurred, it was never happily regarded. Public opinion maintained that because an old man could not make his living as easily as a younger man he could not expect to marry a young wife. The union of a mature woman and a young man received more tolerance but even then "much talk" might follow. Men incapable of making a living by hunting, or those who enjoyed the reputation for stinginess (they "try to hold on to meat and not share it; they hunt alone") sometimes never married. Also there were men who resembled the women previously described and showed little interest in women or sex. They too refrained from marrying.

Blood relatives as close as parallel cousins of the second and third generation came under the incest taboos as did members of the same matrilineal moiety. Marriage to a maternal cross cousin was preferred. Other unions were frequently concluded by sister exchange. Marriage outside of the tribe (macrocosmic group) was not too well regarded. People from abroad, it was felt, could rarely be trusted. Also intertribal marriage might lead to trouble in cases where the members of such a group learned about some mistreatment suffered by one of the outmarrying persons. Marriage to captive women certainly had a place, single men regarding the war party as an opportunity to secure a wife. If the defeated group happened to recognize moiety distinctions a warrior took only a woman of the opposite exogamous division. The initial treatment of captive wives was apt to be harsh but warmer relations usually followed the birth of children. Married men never secured additional spouses through war. Women objected strenuously to sharing a man with anyone but a closely related co-wife.[2] What appears to have been literal bride purchase obtained in unusual circumstances, as when a rich man negotiated for the daughter of a poor family. In return he paid clothing, other valuables, and presumably continued to supply food to his parents-in-law. Such a marriage was not highly esteemed.

Generally a period of bride service, lasting as long as two years, preceded marriage. During this interval a young man supplied meat, skins, and wood for the family of his intended bride, sometimes without directly announcing his intentions to the parents. His plans were probably well understood and he usually enjoyed sexual relations with the girl of his choice. Ideally the period of bride service allowed a youth to demonstrate

[2] But among the Sarsi a captive woman was said to have made an excellent co-wife. Honigmann, *Changes in Sarsi Social Culture* (manuscript).

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his capacity as a provider and worker. With the consent of the girl assured, a boy communicated his plans to his parents. Following their approval his mother visited the girl's mother and the two families arranged a feast at which they exchanged gifts amidst much joking and expressions of good feeling.[33] The two fathers addressed each other "brother-in-law" while the mothers said "sister-in-law." Following the celebration the couple still refrained from openly sleeping together for another four or five days, perhaps out of shyness.

A variant pattern of marriage occurred when a young girl, who had begun to menstruate, named the boy who had "started" her. The mother then informed the youth's mother whereupon it was up to the latter to accept the girl as a daughter-in-law. Should the seducer have been a poor hunter, the girl's family might claim one of his more adept brothers for a son-in-law. Elopements when a girl's parents rejected a suitor took place with the young couple running off, sometimes to another country. With time the parents could usually be won over, perhaps after the advent of a grandchild. Two atypical forms of marriage widely distributed in the northern Athapaskan area remains to be mentioned, namely "wrestling for wives" and childhood betrothal. The first ensued when a strong, unmarried man visited a camp in which he was a stranger. Shaking hands he suggested to the husband that they wrestle for possession of the latter's wife. A man thus approached could decline the challenge. On the other hand his gambling impulse might be aroused. If defeated he saw his wife go with the opponent. Sometimes the angry loser directed sorcery against the successful challenger, aiming to destroy the latter's hunting power. Bystanders broke up a wrestling match that showed signs of developing into "bad trouble" like murder. Occasionally parents contracted engagements between children, exchanging gifts of children's clothing. A girl still in infancy might be betrothed to a boy two or three years old. If both children survived but later developed a distaste for each other, their fathers might press them to marry. In cases of extreme recalcitrance a sister or brother was substituted for one of the partners.

Matrilocal residence followed marriage. After two or three children had been born a husband usually asked his father-in-law for permission to camp by himself. A "good" father-in-law agreed, adding some such advice as, "Be careful; don't go up in the mountain in winter" (because of the many slippery and dangerous places where a hunter could meet injury). Monogamous families were most common. Few men could afford to support as many as two wives and the children they produced.[34] Polygyny

[33] "Among the Pellys and Little Salmons, the custom was that if a man wanted a wife he made her a present of some kind. If he was satisfactory as a son-in-law to the girl's parents the present was kept, if not, it was returned. If the present was kept he had to keep on giving game and skins to the girl and her parents. (Field, *Unpublished manuscript* [1913], 9.) Among the Tlingit, when an engagement between a boy and girl had been concluded, the boy's mother gave gifts to the girl's family which were distributed by the husband among his "daughter's people." Then he gave a dowry to the suitor's friends. Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 428.

[34] Informants reported that Taku men often had four or five wives. In the Pelly River area "there is no limit to the number of wives so long as you can support them, but of late years . . . there are very few with more than one wife." (Field, *Unpublished manuscript* [1913], 9.) Among the Tlingit polygyny was widely practiced. Jones, *Study of the Tlingits of Alaska* (1914), 120.

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was gone. The children too had been killed. Her husband was gone. The older brother said, "Don't think anything about it till we see our brother-in-law and see how he treats us."

The widower found a beaver den and set a net. He got two beaver. From one he removed the fat and he ate the other. Then his brothers-in-law came along. The husband began to weep. He asked them, "Have you seen what I have done?" He added, "You can kill me if you want to." The older brother said, "I'll do nothing till you eat." The husband picked up a piece of fat and cooked it while holding it in his hand. This gesture demonstrated his courage. He knew he was in danger of being killed but was warding off danger with a show of fearlessness and resistance to pain. He offered some meat to the brothers. When they had eaten the elder said, "I'll let you go because your hand is half-cooked now. I'm not going to bother you. I still have a younger sister at home."

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Two observations may be offered concerning this anecdote, first, the responsibility assumed by a brother for his sister's moral conduct in relation to her husband stands out. Second, the use of deliberately induced pain to demonstrate courage should be noted. Both of these patterns are strongly and formally developed in the Plains Culture Area. Not only is the husband in the tale forgiven for killing the stingy woman but he is promised one of her sisters as a new wife.

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Divorce aroused neither sharp criticism or shame, although the deserted spouse might display more or less resentment. Sometimes a man used sorcery to kill the woman who had quit him or to cause her children by the subsequent husband to die. Reasons for divorce included the desire of one marriage partner for another man or woman (perhaps a man who could provide a richer living than the current husband), cruelty, and adultery. Women did not always permanently quit husbands who treated them badly. Sometimes a wife merely ran off to spend a night in the bush. In case of divorce older children remained with the husband while infants went with the mother. When he became grown-up, a son might return to his father. Both patterns suggest the recency and superficial imposition of matrilineal descent in the culture.

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Economic benefits accrued to a widow and her children under the levirate. However, unless the real or classificatory brother were single or the husband of the widow's sister he could not live intimately with the woman but merely supported her and her children in his camp.[37] Under such circumstances a widow would remarry following a two year period of mourning and upon receiving the consent of her brother-in-law. To choose a new husband closely following a man's death, aroused the jealousy of the deceased husband's ghost. As already noted, when a wife died her father frequently invited the bereaved husband to choose a sister-in-law as his spouse and might even insist that the latter be taken.[38]

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Dease River Kaska. Boys married when they could provide sufficient meat and skins for a family, a girl when she was capable of performing household duties and understood the responsibilities of married life, particularly its ideal of faithfulness. Incest rules extended to include one's moiety. Each sex normally secured the parents' consent

[37] Here lies a powerful incentive for two brothers to marry a pair of sisters. Such a marriage readily accomodates the levirate. It would be desirable to know if there is a significant correlation between these two traits when a large series of cultures are compared.

[38] Levirate and sororate have both been reported for the Tlingit. Among these coastal people a nephew sometimes inherited the widow or the niece of a deceased woman might marry the widower. Jones, *Study of the Thlingets of Alaska* (1914), 129.

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to a proposed match. Where such permission was withheld, elopement might follow. The eloping couple then lived alone or, more often, joined another camp. Sometimes angry parents pursued the young people and beat the youth if they caught him. In the normal course of events a young man undertook bride service for a year in the home of his father-in-law. During this period he contrived to have secret sexual relations with his intended spouse. A wealthy father-in-law terminated bride service with a feast, after which the couple were regarded as man and wife. Occasionally fathers arranged engagements between children. Contracted without gift exchange, these agreements were not absolutely binding on the young people and could be abrogated for sufficient cause. Only single men utilized the war party to secure a wife. Residence after marriage was matrilocal.

Sororal polygyny remained limited to wealthy men. Never did a man live with more than two women, plural wives "always got along with each other." The idea of an unrelated woman as co-wife was strongly resented and the presence of such a woman in camp would provoke endless quarreling.[89] Fraternal polyandry existed and is illustrated in a tale reported by Teit, titled "The Deceitful Wife."[90] A woman, married to two brothers, happened to be raped by a war party that prepared to attack her people. The ordeal weakened the woman but the enemy offered her ptarmigan. In return she promised to conceal what had happened. The mother-in-law, however, became suspicious and spoke to her sons. As a result the two husbands sensed danger and proposed to the wife that they all three enjoy a last good meal together. They thereupon killed the woman and fled. An upper Liard River informant reported knowledge of a Dease River Indian who had shared his wife with nine brothers. The ten men alternated in cohabiting with the woman and no trouble ever occurred between them. However, the brothers became extremely jealous when they saw a stranger talk to their wife and reported the incident to the senior husband who warned off the intruder.

Divorce sometimes followed adultery and occasionally a man quit a barren wife. Upon her husband's death a widow became the responsibility of her brother-in-law.

Tsalona. People favored marriage between cross cousins. "Its good for them," the informant explained. The levirate and sororate both obtained.

OLD AGE AND DEATH

Upper Liard Kaska. Many Indians did not live to see old age. Others found their declining years filled with waning prestige and dissatisfaction. With menopause cul-

[89] Allard says: "Polygamy existed among them when they were all pagans. One man would take as many wives as conditions would allow. For instance, if he were a good hunter he would take more than one wife. When I visited the Kaska for the first time in 1925, I found no polygamy among them . . . they had never seen a Catholic priest in their country, but being in their native state more moral than the other races of Indians, the influence of their brethern, the Si kan ni, led them easily to abandon polygamy." (Allard, *Notes on the Kaska and Upper Liard Indians* [1928], 25.) We feel incined to ascribe the loss of polygyny much more to the influence of the white men who invaded the Dease River valley after 1872. Cf. Honigmann, *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society* (1949), 44-45.

[90] Teit, *Kaska Tales* (1917), 461-462.